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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific during the period from July 2011 to June 2012. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to promote dialogue and confidence-building among all stakeholders by organizing annual United Nations conferences on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, which served as important forums in which to assess progress achieved in those fields and to discuss the way forward. The Regional Centre also undertook several field projects to build the capacity of States to combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to promote peace and disarmament through education. The Regional Centre also made substantive contributions to several regional disarmament-related forums.

The Regional Centre strengthened its outreach and advocacy activities and expanded its partnerships and interactions with various stakeholders in the region and beyond. With support from Member States and other partners, the Regional Centre is positioned to further expand its programmes aimed at providing assistance to Member States in the region to address challenges in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation.

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The Regional Centre depends solely on voluntary financial contributions to implement its programmatic activities. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to Member States, including the host country, Nepal, and other partners that supported the Centre's operations and programmes with financial contributions and calls upon those in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operation and to assist in fulfilling the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/39 D, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific is mandated to provide, on request, substantive support for initiatives and other activities mutually agreed upon by the Member States of the Asia-Pacific region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament through the appropriate utilization of available resources. The Regional Centre facilitates and coordinates the implementation of regional activities of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in the Asia-Pacific region.

2. By its resolution 66/56, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction for the activities carried out by the Regional Centre in the past year and expressed its gratitude to the Government of the host country, Nepal, for its cooperation and financial support. The Assembly reaffirmed its strong support for the role of the Centre in the promotion of United Nations activities at the regional level to strengthen peace, stability and security in the Asia-Pacific region and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution.

3. The present report is submitted in compliance with the above-mentioned request and covers the activities of the Regional Centre during the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012. A financial statement on the status of the Trust Fund for the Regional Centre for the second year of the biennium 2010-2011 is contained in the annex.

II. Activities of the Regional Centre

4. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre focused its programmatic activities on the following areas: promoting the implementation of global disarmament and non-proliferation instruments; enhancing regional dialogue and confidence-building in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and regional security; and outreach and advocacy.

A. Promoting the implementation of global disarmament and non-proliferation instruments

5. From 12 to 17 September 2011, the Regional Centre organized a national training course on combating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in Kathmandu, co-hosted by the Government of Nepal and with the financial support of the Government of Japan and the Tokyo Club, a Japanese non-governmental organization. The training was aimed at enhancing the capacity of law enforcement officers in Nepal to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. A total of 25 mid-level law enforcement officers from the Nepal Police, the Armed Police Force and the Department of Customs of Nepal participated in the training. Various training modules were conducted by both international and national trainers, including trainers from the Bonn International Center for Conversion, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the World Customs Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). The training succeeded in strengthening the capacity of the law enforcement officials by

enhancing their knowledge and expertise in key issues related to combating illicit trade in small arms. Those issues included basic concepts; international instruments and normative frameworks; challenges related to Nepal; impact on women; regional cooperation to combat illicit trade and cross-border smuggling; and stockpile management, destruction, marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons.

6. The Regional Centre contributed substantively to a Pacific regional workshop on small arms and light weapons and the arms trade treaty, held in Brisbane, Australia, from 29 February to 2 March 2012. Jointly organized by the Government of Australia, the Pacific Islands Forum and Oxfam Australia, participants of the workshop discussed issues related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the South Pacific context, identified ways to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in the subregion and considered a common subregional position in preparation for the arms trade treaty negotiations.

7. To promote the implementation of the Programme of Action, the Regional Centre substantively supported a regional meeting of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on the implementation of the Programme of Action in Asian countries, held in Bali, Indonesia, on 5 and 6 March 2012. The meeting brought together States in the Asian region to review and advance the implementation of the Programme of Action at the regional level and to contribute to the broad-based consultation process for the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2012.

8. The Regional Centre also made substantive contributions to a subregional workshop and study visit on illicit small arms and light weapons and unexploded ordnance control held in Phnom Penh, from 27 to 30 March 2012. The participants at the workshop, which was organized by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), considered and identified ways to reduce illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, improve national coordination and enhance the sharing of knowledge and information on combating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and controlling unexploded ordnance among the defence and national police agencies of ASEAN member States.

9. The Regional Centre continued its efforts to address challenges posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in Nepal through its substantive and logistical support to the activities of the Nepal Working Group on Armed Violence Reduction.[1] The Working Group continued to hold quarterly meetings, which provided a platform for information-sharing among Government officials, national and international civil society organizations and United Nations agencies on issues concerning this illicit trade.

[1] The Working Group was established by the Regional Centre, together with the South Asia Regional Office of the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Mine Action Service-Nepal, in July 2010. In December 2011, the Working Group changed its name from the Nepal Working Group on Small Arms and Other Portable Lethal Weapons to the Nepal Working Group on Armed Violence Reduction.

10. To promote the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), on the role of women in peacebuilding and on ending conflict-related sexual violence, respectively, the Regional Centre supported the Peace Support Working Group for Nepal in its efforts to promote the implementation of the National Action Plan on resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) adopted by the Government of Nepal.

B. Promoting dialogue and confidence in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and security

11. The Regional Centre organized the two annual conferences on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, which served as important forums for Government officials, experts and representatives of academia and civil society to engage in frank discussions and to explore solutions to the challenges in those areas.

12. In collaboration with the Government of Japan and the City of Matsumoto, the Regional Centre organized the twenty-third United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, on the theme "Urgent and united action towards a nuclear-weapon-free world", which was held in Matsumoto from 27 to 29 July 2011.

13. The participants of the Conference took stock of the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as individual and collective efforts in fulfilling the commitments reflected in its conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions, including the importance of convening a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. In the context of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, participants discussed future steps on nuclear disarmament to be taken by all nuclear-weapon States, as well as aspects of a future nuclear weapons convention. Participants also discussed possible ways to overcome the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The implications of the incident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in March 2011 and the importance of the Nuclear Security Summit held in Seoul in 2012 were also addressed. Many participants emphasized the important role played by civil society in global awareness-raising, the promotion of transparency, the creation of momentum, and democratic legitimacy in disarmament efforts.

14. For the first time as part of the agenda of the Conference, a special session on peace and disarmament was held with the participation of more than 150 students from nine Matsumoto high schools. The students deliberated issues related to peace and disarmament, with several Conference participants acting as panellists and providing feedback. The proactive student participation demonstrated the significance of disarmament education and its impact on the general public, in particular young people. It is noteworthy that, in hosting the Conference, the City of Matsumoto and its citizens, with the support of over 100 volunteers, organized more than 20 side events, including concerts, exhibitions and poetry contests.

15. The year 2011 marked the tenth anniversary of the United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, also known as the Jeju Process on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. The Regional Centre, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of

Korea, organized the tenth Joint Conference in Jeju on 7 and 8 November 2011. More than 70 representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations and experts from policy institutes, academia and other civil society organizations participated in frank and interactive discussions.

16. Under the overall theme "Past and future of disarmament and non-proliferation", participants reviewed the past decade of disarmament and non-proliferation, including the successes achieved as well as the setbacks suffered, and recognized the meaningful contribution made by the past nine annual Conferences to global and regional efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation. The participants discussed the importance, challenges and expected outcome of the Nuclear Security Summit, held in Seoul in 2012. Regarding the nuclear issue concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, participants noted the importance of resuming the Six-Party Talks while acknowledging the substantive challenges associated with this. With regard to conventional arms control, participants underlined the importance of an arms trade treaty. They also addressed the issue of conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula.

C. Partnership, outreach and advocacy

17. The Regional Centre contributed substantively to the organization of a student presentation on international issues held in Saitama, Japan, on 30 August 2011. The event was organized by the City of Saitama, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and Japan Model United Nations, with the aim of promoting disarmament education, in accordance with the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session (A/57/124). The event included the presentation of concrete proposals on disarmament from 40 students from high schools in Saitama and an exchange of views on those proposals with a panel consisting of senior representatives from the Regional Centre, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and non-governmental organizations. The success of the event demonstrated the potential for enhancing cooperation between local governments and the United Nations in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education.

18. From June to December 2011, the Regional Centre successfully piloted a project in the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal on peace education and outreach entitled "Volunteers for peace education", in collaboration with the Department of Conflict, Peace and Development Studies of Tribhuvan University and the Nepalese non-governmental organization DidiBahini and with the support of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Volunteers. The project included training volunteer youth trainers, conducting workshops at six public schools and organizing short-story and poetry contests. Through the pilot project, the Regional Centre succeeded in raising awareness of peace and non-violent conflict resolution among more than 200 students; trained and empowered 14 youth volunteer trainers who will continue to carry out the work; and demonstrated the potential of volunteerism to contribute to peace education. The blueprint of the project could be replicated in other post-conflict settings.

19. The Regional Centre continued its efforts to strengthen partnerships with key regional stakeholders, including Member States, regional and subregional organizations, other United Nations entities and civil society through enhanced information-sharing and dialogue, as well as joint initiatives and projects.

20. In this context, the Regional Centre enhanced its partnerships with regional and other intergovernmental organizations, including ASEAN, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Asian Development Bank, the Pacific Islands Forum, the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL, as with other United Nations agencies, such as UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The Regional Centre expanded its outreach activities to include academic institutions and regional non-governmental organizations. Efforts are under way to explore joint initiatives and projects on peace and disarmament-related issues with relevant and interested entities in the region.

21. As part of its outreach efforts, the Regional Centre continued to regularly distribute its newsletter and upgraded its website (www.unrcpd.org.np) to ensure the regular provision of accurate information about its work and to broaden its engagement with current and potential stakeholders.

D. Future activities

22. While continuing its regular activities, which include annual conferences, workshops and outreach and advocacy activities, the Regional Centre plans to expand its efforts to provide practical assistance to States in the region, upon their request, in the areas of capacity-building, technical assistance and training on such challenges as illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. It will continue to enhance efforts to pair identified needs for such assistance with available resources and projects.

23. Combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is one of the priorities for many countries in the region. To address this important topic, the Regional Centre will adapt the highly successful Inter-Institutional Training Course on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives pioneered by the Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean to the specific situation and needs of the Asia-Pacific region.

24. To support international efforts in preventing non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, in particular for terrorist purposes, as embodied in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Regional Centre stands ready to engage stakeholders in the region, in particular the Member States, to assist with their efforts to implement the resolution, including through awareness-raising and capacity-building.

III. Staffing and financing

25. In February 2012, a new Director of the Regional Centre was appointed. The Director is currently supported by one Professional (P-3) and one General Service (G-7) staff funded from the regular budget. The host country, Nepal, through its

voluntary contribution, provided two local support staff, and Switzerland provided a United Nations Volunteer intern to the Regional Centre. The Regional Centre continues to rely on voluntary contributions for all its substantive programmes and for part of its operating costs.

26. In 2011, voluntary contributions in the amount of $350,042 were received from Member States and other donors. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Member States and civil society organizations that have made financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre, including China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey, as well as two Japanese non-governmental organizations, Rissho Kosei-kai and the Tokyo Club. Those financial and in-kind contributions remain essential to ensuring the sustainability of the operations, core activities and programmes of the Regional Centre. The Secretary-General urges all Member States, in particular those from the region, and other donors to provide financial resources in support of the Centre's programmes, which benefit the Asia-Pacific region.

IV. Conclusion

27. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre actively engaged in and supported peace and disarmament initiatives in the region. Working with Member States and other stakeholders, it continued to fulfil its mandate to provide assistance, upon request, to Member States and conduct outreach and advocacy activities. The Centre will continue to expand its activities as feasible, identifying new and innovative modalities to provide support to Member States in the region. The two annual conferences held in Japan and the Republic of Korea continue to serve as important forums to promote dialogue and confidence-building in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and security. The Regional Centre stands ready to enhance and expand the level of assistance that it provides to Member States in addressing the challenges they face in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation.

28. The Secretary-General reiterates his call to Member States and other partners in a position to do so to provide the Regional Centre with the financial and in-kind support necessary to ensure that it will be able to continue to carry out its mandate effectively and serve the needs of Member States in the region.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for 2011

(United States dollars)

Reserves and fund balance, 1 January 2011	565 237
Income	
Voluntary contributions	350 042
Interest income	11 305
Other/miscellaneous income	—
Total income	**361 347**
Expenditure	181 474
Programme support costs	23 061
Total expenditure	**204 535**
Reserves and fund balance, 31 December 2011	**722 049**

Note: The information is based on the statement of income and expenditure for 2011. During the period under review, contributions totalling $350,042 were received from China ($50,000), Kazakhstan ($10,000), Nepal ($88,697), Pakistan ($4,988), the Republic of Korea ($150,000), Switzerland ($21,720), Thailand ($3,000), Turkey ($10,000) and the Tokyo Club ($11,637).

During the period 1 January to 31 May 2012, an additional contribution in the amount of $3,000 was received from Thailand.